10 years combating drivel

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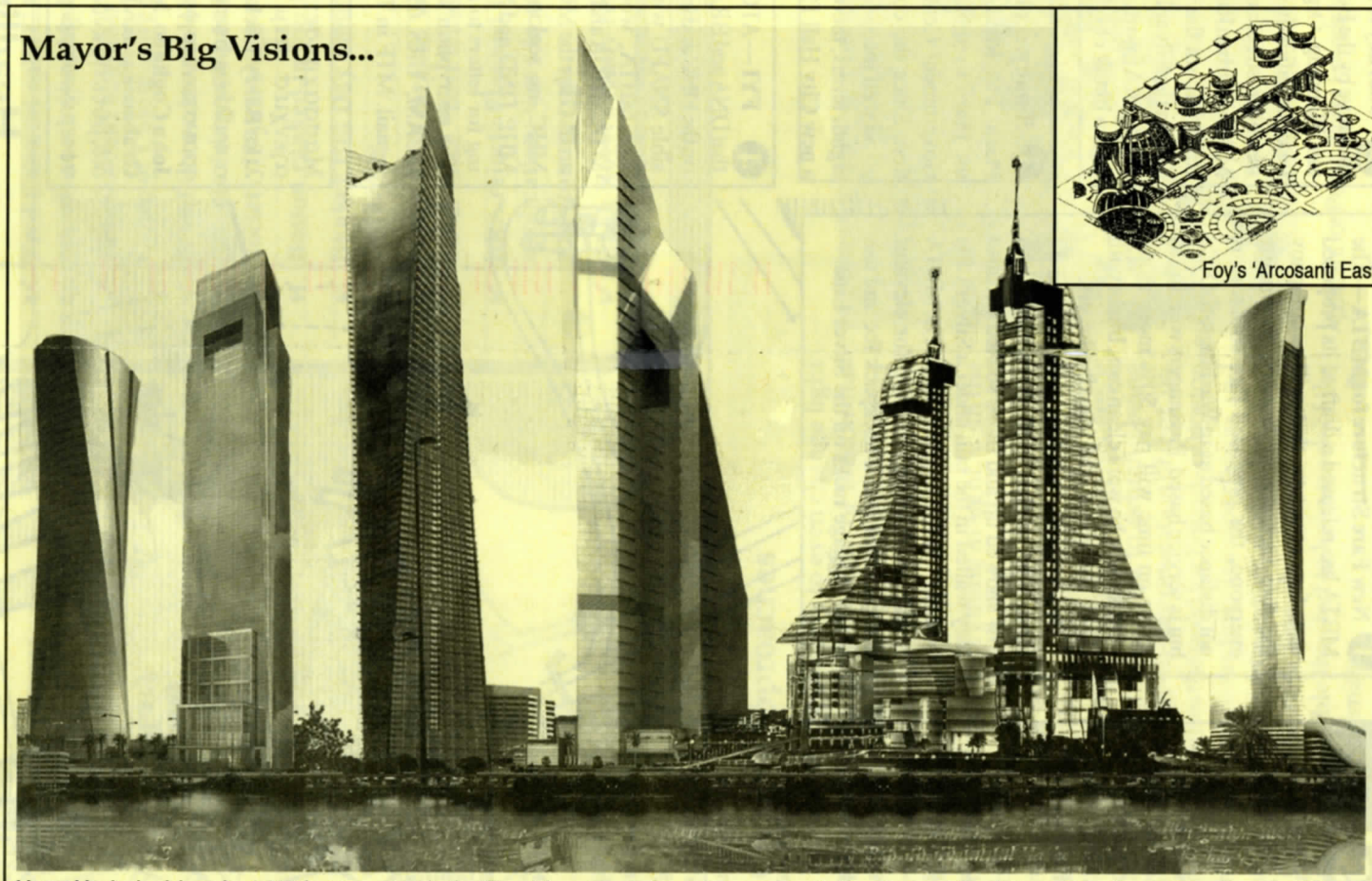
THE BOSTON INFORMER

No. 75 — *The truly highbrow rag for people who can read* — April 1, 2006

Mayor's Big Visions...



Foy's 'Arcosanti East'

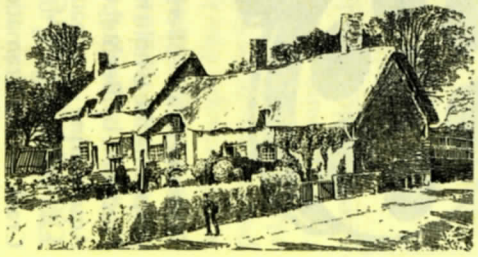
Mayor Menino's vision of a 1,000-foot tower to win the "Darwinian struggle for survival" has awoken fans of highrises in Boston. A number of additional towers have been suggested for the downtown, and these seven are just a few of those already approved for the original 1950s High Spine along the Charles River near Beacon Street. Competing visions are popping up, including one from former Commonwealth Development head Doug Foy who proposed a very different development model based on architect Paolo Soleri's earthy Arcosanti project in Arizona that features sustainability, efficient circulation of people and resources, multiuse buildings, solar orientation and all the rest. BRA head Mark Maloney likes both proposals.

Evacuation Routes

Unlike Florida residents accustomed to evacuating during hurricane season, Boston residents are novices. When blue and white "Evacuation Route" signs went up virtually overnight and select residents received a detailed pamphlet in the mail describing evacuation procedures, a lot of residents were left scratching their heads. Seems most of the City hasn't got a clue what the evacuation procedures are, as shown recently on St. Patrick's Day when the City announced City Hall would be closed for Evacuation Day causing 10,000 people to leave the City, never to return.

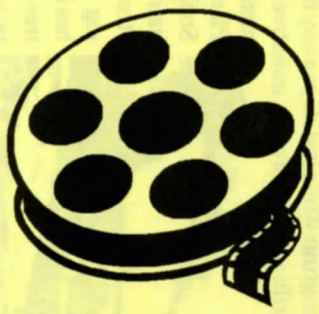
Greenway Goes Historic

Thanks to Nancy Brennan, executive director of the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway Conservancy, portions of Plimouth Plantation are being relocated to parcels along the Greenway as a way to increase awareness of New England's history and to fill space on the Greenway. Since Plymouth Rock is the world's second most disappointing tourist attraction (after Stonehenge), visitors can now skip the whole excursion to Plymouth guilt-free and enjoy strolling among the pilgrims while just steps away from Starbucks. Mayor Menino's brilliant Crossroads initiative will complement the Plimouth Plantation exhibit. So far, the bold initiative to upgrade streets intersecting the Greenway has identified street trees as the key improvement. Wow.



Movies Not to Miss!

Walk the Line — a mystery story of how a developer and the BRA managed to create a 1-acre Planned Development Area with no height limits by including public roads and sidewalks.



The New World — how the MBTA of the future will become clean, punctual and accessible with elevators and escalators always working and employees always polite and knowledgeable.

Curious George — the story of a President who couldn't wait to find out what kind of weapons were in Iraq.

Good Night, and Good Luck — a suspense story about what happens after Bechtel/Parsons Brinckerhoff said farewell to the Big Dig last December.

Transamerica — offers a bold new concept, based on the success of the Big Dig, proposing the whole nationwide Federal Highway System be put underground. Produced by Bechtel Corp.

Aquamarine — a beautiful documentary depicting the subtle colors of the water as it leaks into the Big Dig tunnels.

Crash — the dramatic impact on expectations as Attorney General Tom Reilly announced he could find only $108 million in claims for refunds in the $14.6 billion Big Dig project.

Find Me Guilty [subtitle: "If you can find me."] — another chapter in the saga of Whitey Bulger. Filmed recently on location in So. Boston with Whitey playing himself.

Duck Season — the story of Big Dig consultants and contractors trying to avoid claims for cost overruns.

1 New Fare Structure for MBTA—The MBTA has released a draft of its proposed new fare structure that will accompany the fare increace in January. Surprising everyone, the proposed fare structure is not distance based as in Washington, D.C., but is service based. Passengers wanting to arrive on time will pay 50% more along with those who want clean cars, buses with shock absorbers, and friendly drivers.

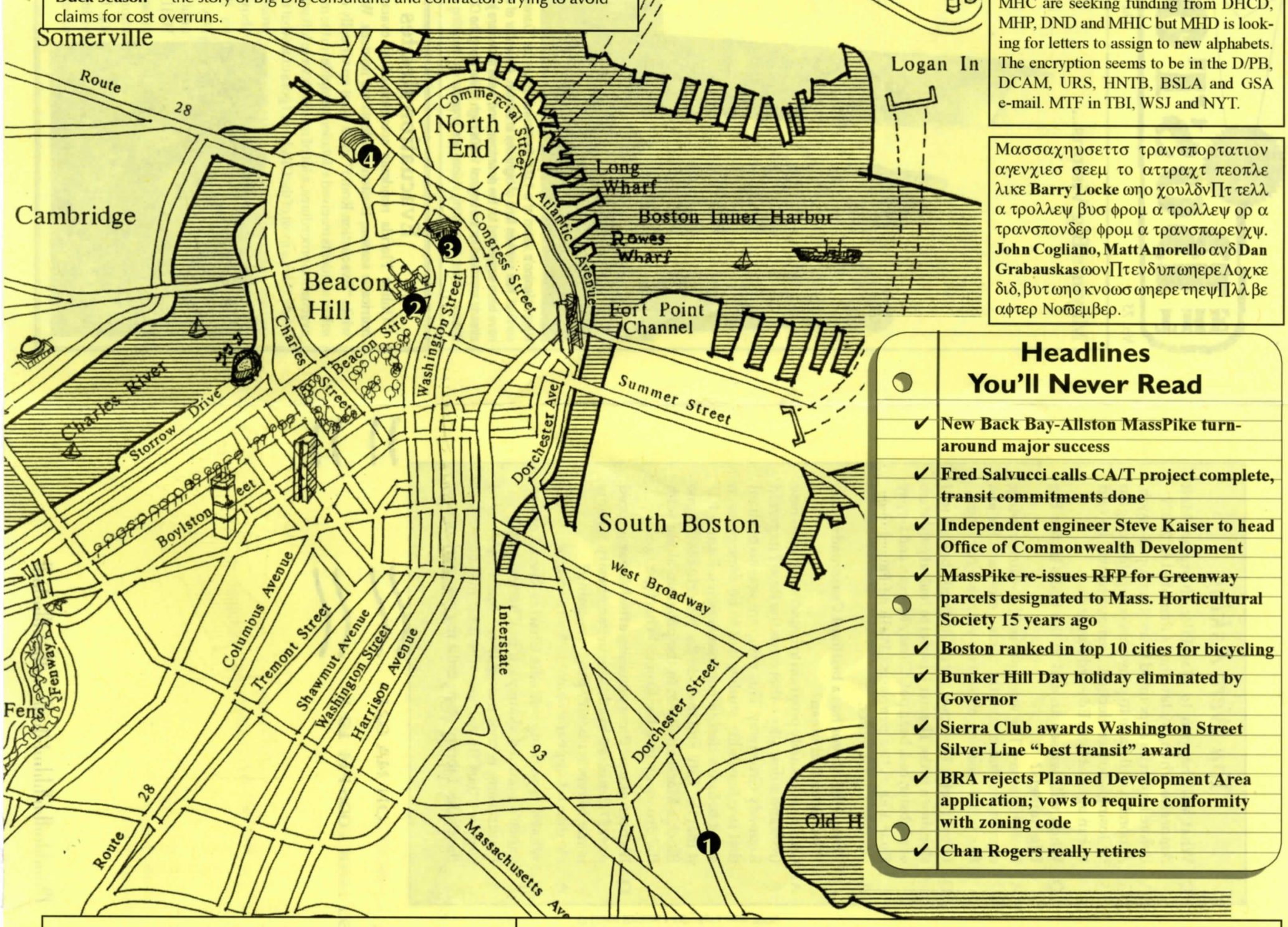
Bus-to-train transfers will be free to those who waited until three buses in a row showed up and those soaked because they waited in the rain under a Silver Line "shelter" on Washington Street. The MBTA is still considering charging for elevator and escalator use, a backpack fee and use of the luggage racks on the Silver Line.

2 Journey to 2030 a new transportation initiative by the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization. The journey takes us safely in a specially outfitted time machine streetcar for a ride around the MBTA's Urban Ring, along the North-South RailLink, on the Green Line to Medford, and on the Silver Line from Dudley Square to Logan Airport. At the end of the ride, we sign a blank check.

3 Finally, a plan to remake City Hall Plaza. The MBTA has begun digging up the Plaza to ,make new headhouse for the Government Center Blue/Green Line station. Since the construction will probably go on well into Mayor Menino's seventh or eighth terms, there is no longer any need or a new City Hall Plaza plan.

4 FYI—ATC Information has learned that DNA and BRA are doing a post mortem on the DNC and have concerns about a possible SNAFU with the MBTA and MHC. The MBTA, working with BSA, BBA, MTA, BHCA and CW/SWA, is developing an IAG for the MCCCA. ABC, BBAC and MHC are seeking funding from DHCD, MHP, DND and MHIC but MHD is looking for letters to assign to new alphabets. The encryption seems to be in the D/PB, DCAM, URS, HNTB, BSLA and GSA e-mail. MTF in TBI, WSJ and NYT.

Μασσαχηυσεττσ τρανσπορτατιον αγενχιεσ σεεμ το αττραχτ πεοπλε λικε **Barry Locke** ωηο χουλδνΠτ τελλ α τρολλεψ βυσ φρομ α τρολλεψ ορ α τρανσπονδερ φρομ α τρανσπαρενχψ. **John Cogliano, Matt Amorello** ανδ **Dan Grabauskas** ωονΠτενδ υπ ωηερε Λοχκε διδ, βυτ ωηο κνοωσ ωηερε τηεψΠλλ βε αφτερ Νοϖεμβερ.

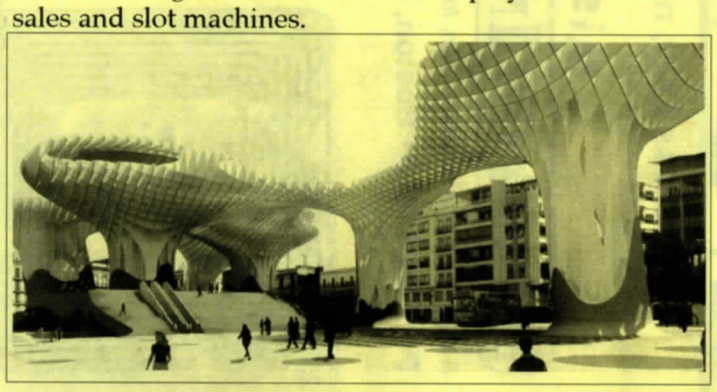


Headlines You'll Never Read

- ✔ New Back Bay-Allston MassPike turn-around major success
- ✔ Fred Salvucci calls CA/T project complete, transit commitments done
- ✔ Independent engineer Steve Kaiser to head Office of Commonwealth Development
- ✔ MassPike re-issues RFP for Greenway parcels designated to Mass. Horticultural Society 15 years ago
- ✔ Boston ranked in top 10 cities for bicycling
- ✔ Bunker Hill Day holiday eliminated by Governor
- ✔ Sierra Club awards Washington Street Silver Line "best transit" award
- ✔ BRA rejects Planned Development Area application; vows to require conformity with zoning code
- ✔ Chan Rogers really retires

Dewey Square Improvements

South Station's Dewey Square, named after the duck, not the near-President, is still struggling with how to become once again a vibrant urban node instead of a simply a cut-through. The latest scheme would focus on getting pedestrians from SouthStation to the Financial District via a large, free-form bridge with cafes, shopping stalls, restaurants, housing, small horticultural displays, CharlieTicket sales and slot machines.



Creative approaches

Faced with the inability to even change light bulbs in street lights, the City of Boston has decided that wholesale privatization of all City services and departments is necessary to keep the City going. The City has issued an RFP to privatize virtually everything in sight, with the goal of reducing the cost of running the City and improving overall service. The RFP calls for expanding the so-called "Friends" concept from simply raising funds for Copley Square or Christopher Columbus Park to actually being involved in the day-to-day operation of the City. The RFP identifies the need for Friends of Boston groups for the Accounting, Transportation, and Public Works Departments in particular.

Critics of the new Friends concept claim it will require double the staff to keep track of the Friends and enemies. ▶

Applicant for Public Works Friends team

Welcome to The Boston MisInformer,

the annual April Fool's issue of The Boston Informer, an otherwise "serious" newsletter covering development, construction and transportation downtown.

The Boston Informer is published by ATC Information, Inc., six times yearly in Boston, Massachusetts. President: Anthony Casendino; vice-presidents, Anne McKinnon, Chris Fincham.

The Boston Informer is available by mail only. $25.00 per year (cheap!). Questions? Telephone (617) 723-7030, fax (617) 437-1886 or e-mail: Boston Informer@cs.com. Web: www.bostoninformer.com.

Boston Police to issue citations for annoying infractions...

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Do as I say, not as I do!

You Were Asking

Q. What will happen to MassPike chairman Matt Amorello when, by law, he is demoted in 2007?

A. Before he can be appointed to another top state job, Amorello will have to prove his competence again by losing another election. Perhaps he will be told to run against Sen. Edward Kennedy.

Q. When will we see an end to the leaks in the Big Dig tunnels?

A. Probably never. The warranty on the waterproofing membrane that covers the tunnel roof runs for just five years—leaving about two years to go. Honest.

Q. I don't get it. Does the City really think tourists will slog down to the Theater District to look at gold stars of a lobster, cod, bean pot, Chesty Morgan and Gypsy Rose Lee at the proposed Walk of Fame?

A. We don't get it either.

Q. I heard the Mayor has a brilliant Crossroads plan. What does that mean?

A. Crossroads is a city program to improve streets—new trees and sidewalks—that cross the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway. This program was so brilliant that two feasibility studies had to be done on each street before a design contract was let. Rumor has it that the City will include the historic Blackstone Block's Marshall Street in the program along with the driveway into the Rowes Wharf garage.

Q. It's been almost three years since the Mayor secured over $1.2 million to address urban obesity. So how is the Mayor's obesity program going?

A. He doesn't appear to have lost any weight.

Q. What's happening with the Charles River Conservancy's planned skate park in Charlestown?

A. Fundraising is continuing apace, and in a show of support, the City will keep the interim skate park at the Public Library steps until the new park opens.

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